

March 10, 2015

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in opposition to the proposed legislation, Bill 5505.

I am an attorney who has been practicing law in Connecticut for 22 years. I maintain my firm in Somers. We are a small business—four lawyers and five employees.

My practice includes family law. Over the years, I have served the Courts as a guardian ad litem and as an attorney for minor children in family law, probate and criminal matters.

I have reviewed Bill 5505. This proposed legislation is harmful to parents and to children.

Bill 5505 is a short sighted, reactive Bill—not a thoughtful, proactive piece of legislation. Specifically, if enacted, the provisions of 5505 will: 1) strip judges of the discretion to permit supervised parenting time on a case by case basis; 2) expose attorneys for minor children and guardians ad litem to personal liability for fulfilling their duties to conflicted families (essentially resulting in the elimination of professionals who will serve in these roles); 3) eliminate **independent** psychological evaluations; and, 4) impose costly burdens on parents who wish to have important mental health evidence presented in custody proceedings (likely resulting in the evidence never being considered).

In my experience, there is no area of law where judicial discretion is more integral than in family law. Each case is uniquely fact specific. Each case is possessed of its own nuances and variables which can change over time. Judges must be afforded reasonable discretion to enter orders which best suit each case that comes before the Court. This Bill is a severe infringement on judicial discretion **and** judicial independence.

Please vote against Bill 5505.

Respectfully,
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